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Edvard Munch

1863-1944

ETCHINGS WOODCUTS AND LITHOGRAPHS

Foreword

Expressionism is an accepted label for that kind of subjective art which derives from the artist's feelings more than from his senses or his intellect. It is essentially an introspective and often gloomy or even tragic art, which is the natural reflection of the harshness and uncertainty of the present age. Have we not recently seen an instructive mass reaction of sympathy to the art of Van Gogh, the founder of expressionism in its modern phase? Of even greater influence as an expressionist than Van Gogh was the Norwegian painter Edvard Munch, who inspired the whole school of modern German expressionists whose work was shown last year by the Institute of Contemporary Arts and the Arts Council. Munch is comparatively unknown in this country, and a comprehensive exhibition of his paintings and graphic works which the Oslo Kommunes Kunstsamlinger has kindly offered to send in the autumn of 1951 will be eagerly awaited. In the meantime, the Oslo Kommunes Kunstsamlinger and its Director, Dr. J. H. Langaard, have increased our indebtedness to them by agreeing to send the present exhibition of fifty graphic works by this great artist, which may be shown in smaller centres to which the major exhibition cannot be sent. These prints, which will undoubtedly whet the appetite for the greater event next year, have been selected by Dr. Langaard whose friendly co-operation is greatly appreciated, as is the assistance given by Mr. Fredrik Wulfsberg, Cultural Attaché at the Norwegian Embassy in London. Mr. J. P. Hodin, author of an important monograph on Munch published in 1948, has written a sensitive evaluation of Munch's work as a graphic artist.

PHILIP JAMES

Introduction

In his will the great Norwegian painter, Edvard Munch, left to the city of Oslo an immense collection of his own works. There were no conditions attached to this gift, which represents the most valuable collection of works of art ever bequeathed to any public body in Norway. Some time ago the city of Oslo decided to build a separate gallery to house the Munch bequest as soon as building materials were once more available.

In the meantime, however, other countries show a persistent desire to make themselves better acquainted with Munch's work, and Oslo is anxious to co-operate in this matter. A large exhibition of Munch's works is being organised and will shortly be sent to America. At the invitation of the Arts Council of Great Britain this exhibition will also be shown in some of the larger towns in Great Britain, including London, before the end of 1951, when it goes on to the Hague and Paris.

The works of this great artist have been exhibited more often and in more countries than those of any other Norwegian painter, but they are less known in Great Britain than in Scandinavia or on the Continent. For this reason an invitation from the Arts Council of Great Britain to prepare an exhibition of Munch's prints to be shown in the provincial galleries has readily been accepted, the more so as these fifty prints are intended to be the forerunner of the large and comprehensive exhibition which will be seen in Great Britain in 1951.

It has been said of Edvard Munch that as a graphic artist he is one of those who have helped to raise the engraver's art to a higher degree of authority as a medium distinct from painting. From the very beginning he mastered its various techniques, particularly those of woodcutting and lithography, with great confidence, giving expression to his personality with freedom and invention.

Edvard Munch began engraving in 1894. For the rest of his life, as a painter, he nearly always used the etching, the woodcut or the lithograph as the medium through which to obtain a precise rendering of his artistic vision or thought. His graphic work, therefore, can serve as an approach to essential spheres of his artistic personality, as well as standing on its own as in no way inferior to his painting, both by virtue of its quality and quantity.

The vigorous abundance, characteristic of Munch's artistic power, cannot, of course, appear to its full extent in so limited a selection of his work as this. Even so, it discloses one of the essential features of his art: the manner in which a visionary and universal fervour has found its outlet in an intense, evocative and personal form of expression.

JOHAN H. LANGAARD

EDVARD MUNCH'S GRAPHIC ART

The influence which Edvard Munch exercised on painting East of the Rhine is comparable to that of Cézanne, van Gogh, and Gauguin in France. He not only influenced painting, but created what we may call a spiritual climate. No other artist, not even van Gogh, can be compared with him in this respect. Munch is the only painter who can be said, together with Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, and Ibsen, to have formed the attitude to life of a whole generation. This was due to the emphasis of the idea content in his art, and also to the subconscious energy which urged him to disclose the inner sources of the melancholy and the pessimism of his age. "All that is profound and obscure, everything for which the medium of language has as yet devised no system of definition and which is thus inarticulate and has manifested itself only as a dim presentiment, finds expression in the works of Munch and thus enters into our consciousness." So wrote a critic in the 'nineties. The first

phase of Munch's influence was followed by a second in the years close before and after the first world war, when knowledge of psycho-analysis was spreading and writers like Kafka had established their fame. The third is starting now in the West with a large exhibition of Munch's works which is to tour America.

Up to 1908 Munch's work was dominated by the dark and destructive forces of life: death, love as the biological tragedy of the sexes, anxiety in the sense of the Existentialists. There is a close relationship between Munch's world and that of Kierkegaard. Munch expressed his ideas in a series of pictures called *The Frieze of Life*. After 1909 he found the harmony of the contrasting energies of life and, having returned to Norway after many years in foreign countries (1889–92 in Paris, 1892–1908 in Germany), he embarked on the great murals for Oslo University depicting the Eternal Forces: The Sun, History, and Alma Mater (Motherhood, Fertility). Parallel with these works there are life-size portraits, self-portraits, nudes, landscapes, worker's motifs, all of them tending to form series. In the 'twenties Munch returned to themes of his youth, thus rounding off his work. Formally he started as a realist but soon embraced symbolism intermixed with elements of Jugendstil (Art Nouveau). Impressionism and Fauvism had an influence on his colours and his brushwork, Gauguin and Bonnard on his line and composition. But all influences were moulded by Munch's strong, untamable personality. Symbolism gave way to an expressionism of Munch's own conception and led after 1909 to a more balanced, and even monumental, style.

In 1892 Munch exhibited for the first time in Berlin, and from this year dates his rôle as an artist of European stature. The exhibition, which included works from his *Frieze of Life*, caused a scandal. Two years later he made his first graphic works in Berlin, dry-point engravings like *Death and the Maiden* (No. 1) and *The Sick Child* (No. 4). They show an artistic mastery and refinement from the very beginning. Munch was a good

draughtsman with a feeling for the possibilities offered by a new medium. Beside the dry-points he executed etchings, aquatints, and mezzotints. He loved to experiment and to combine techniques: etching with dry-point or vice versa, aquatint with etching, on copper or zinc, with or without using a scraper. Between 1894 and 1896 he had produced about fifty engravings; in his entire work there are 200. To-day, though one admires their superb technique, the symbolism of some of his earlier works attracts our admiration less than simple poetic statements like *Moonlight* of 1895 (No. 7) or the engraved portraits.

In 1889 Munch made his first lithographs. In this medium he created the greatest number of his graphic works. Themes from his paintings, especially from *The Frieze of Life*, appear here, but he used this technique also for all kinds of spontaneous impressions, annotations of ideas, portraits, etc. One of his first lithographs is the *Self-portrait* of 1895 (No. 25), made in Berlin. In Paris during the years 1896–97 Munch devoted most of his time to lithographic work and developed his technique of the coloured lithograph—probably inspired by Toulouse-Lautrec—in the workshop of the famous printer, Clot. *The Sick Child* (No. 30, 1896) is one of his finest works. He drew either directly on the stone, on specially prepared zinc plates, or with chalk on paper. On the stone he used chalk or indian ink, or both; sometimes also a scraper; and he printed on differently toned papers. For the coloured lithographs, often of considerable size, two to four stones were used. By 1895–7 Munch had produced about forty lithographs.

Parallel with the lithographs he also produced woodcuts, of which he made more than thirty in the early years between 1895 and 1899. Whereas in his lithographs and woodcuts he advanced their technical possibilities, in his engravings he remained more traditional, and the technical expression of his fantasy does not exceed that of Goya. Like the lithograph, the woodcut gave rich possibilities for experiment; for

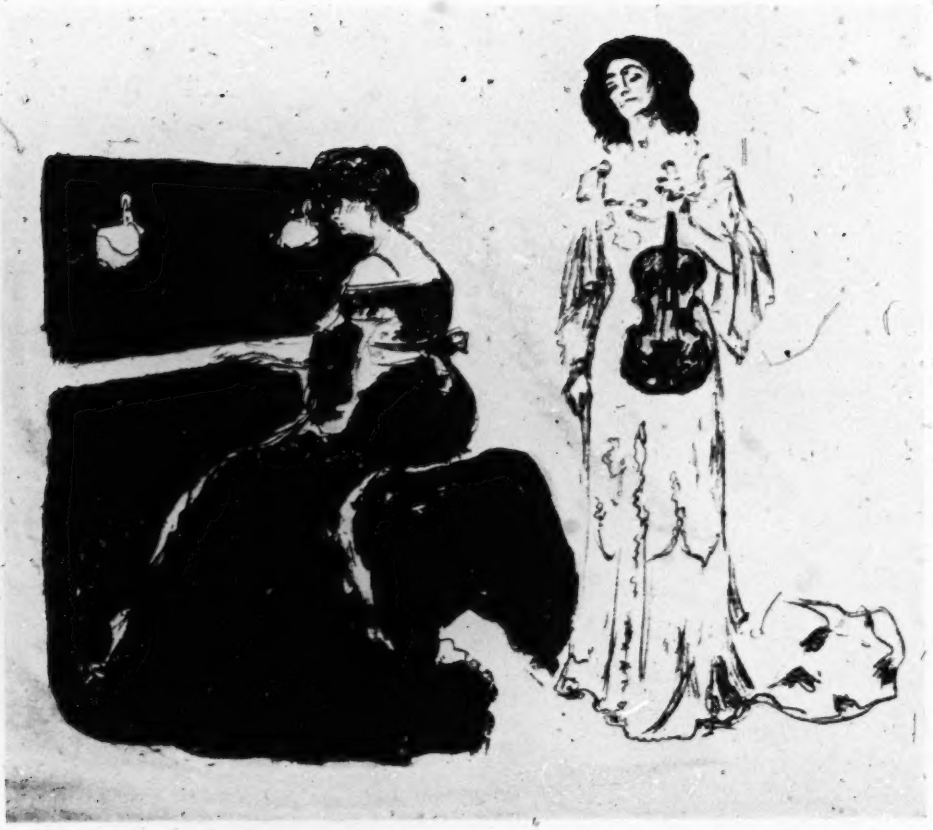
instance, coloured woodcuts and lithographs were combined. The woodcuts are printed either in black and white or in colours on differently toned papers. (We can find two-coloured woodcuts printed with one plate or two plates with several colours or more plates.) One theme is sometimes given in different versions with two, three, or four colours. The woodcuts were mostly printed by Munch himself. Sometimes he sawed out a part of the plate to colour it differently from the rest. What splendid results he achieved are seen in works like *Sun Bath* (No. 23, 1915) or *Women on the Beach* (No. 19, 1898). It was in the woodcuts that Munch made the most monumental and severe compositions of his graphic work.

Munch started to use graphic techniques at a time when his paintings were vehemently criticised. He wanted to reach a multitude of people with his works, and prints, especially the lithograph, offered him the opportunity of doing so. Munch is, without any doubt, one of the leading graphic artists of our time.

J. P. HODIN

1. THE URN (No. 32)

2. SEPARATION I (No. 35)



3. VIOLIN CONCERT (No. 46)

4. MOONLIGHT (No. 15)

Catalogue

Dimensions are given in centimetres and inches, height preceding width; those given for his etchings indicate the size of the plate. Unless otherwise stated, the works are unsigned.

The abbreviation *Sch.* refers to the works of Gustave Schiefler: *Verzeichnis des graphischen Werkes Edvard Munchs bis 1906* (Cassirer, Berlin, 1907), and *Edvard Munch. Das graphische Werk, 1906–1926* (Euphorion, Berlin, 1927).

ETCHINGS

1. DEATH AND THE MAIDEN 1894
   31 × 21·5 cm. (12¼ × 8½ in.). Sch. No. 3
   Drypoint. Printed in 1894 by Sabo, Angerer and Felsing, Berlin

2. VAMPIRE 1894
   20 × 28 cm. (7⅞ × 11 in.). Sch. No. 4
   Drypoint. Printed in 1894 by Sabo, Angerer and Felsing. Some first states were called by Munch "before letter". Cf. No. 13

3. CONSOLATION 1894
   21·5 × 32 cm. (8½ × 12⅝ in.). Sch. No. 6
   Drypoint and wash. Printed by Sabo, Angerer and Felsing

4. THE SICK CHILD 1894
   38·5 × 29 cm. (15⅛ × 11¾ in.). Sch. No. 7
   Drypoint. Printed in 1895 by Sabo, Angerer and Felsing. This subject had already been used in a painting of 1885. At the bottom, a trial etching of a landscape

5. A BOHEMIAN OF CHRISTIANIA, II 1895
   29·5 × 39·5 cm. (11⅝ × 15½ in.). Sch. No. 11
   Etching and wash. Printed in 1895 by Sabo, Angerer and Felsing

6. TETE-A-TETE 1895
   22 × 33 cm. (8⅝ × 13 in.). Sch. No. 12
   Etching. Printed in 1895 by Felsing, Berlin

7. MOONLIGHT 1895
36×26·5 cm. (14¼×10½ in.). Sch. No. 13
Drypoint and wash. Printed in 1895 by Sabo, Angerer and Felsing. Motif after a painting of 1890 of Saint-Cloud

8. LONELY PEOPLE 1895
16·5×22·5 cm. (6½×8⅞ in.). Sch. No. 20
Drypoint and wash. Printed in 1895 by Felsing

9. THE KISS 1895
34·5×27·5 cm. (13⅝×10¾ in.). Sch. No. 22
Drypoint and wash. Printed in 1895 by Sabo, Angerer and Felsing. Cf. No. 17

10. HEAD OF A GIRL 1895
39×29 cm. (15⅜×11⅜ in.). Sch. No. 12
Etching. Printed in 1895 by Felsing

11. HEAD OF A YOUNG WOMAN 1902
26×22·3 cm. (10¼×8¾ in.). Sch. No. 162
Drypoint. Printed in 1902 by Felsing

12. THE NURSE 1908–9
21×15 cm. (8¼×5⅞ in.). Sch. No. 269
Drypoint

WOOD ENGRAVINGS

13. VAMPIRE 1895
38×58 cm. (15×22⅞ in.). Sch. No. 34
Combination of wood-engraving and lithography in several colours. Cf. No. 2

14. IN A TRESS OF HAIR 1896
55×38 cm. (21⅝×15 in.). Sch. No. 80
Three blocks

15. MOONLIGHT 1896
Signed: *Edv. Munch*
40×46·7 cm. (15¾×18¾ in.). Sch. No. 81
Four blocks. The first four states were printed partly by the artist himself and partly by Clot and Lemercier in 1896. This is the first wood-engraving in which colour was seriously attempted by Munch.
The motif is taken from a painting of 1895

16. IN MAN'S BRAIN 1897
37·5×57 cm. (14¾×22½ in.). Sch. No. 98

17. THE KISS 1897–8
44·1×44·7 cm. (17¾×17⅝ in.). Sch. No. 102*a*
The first states in a series of variants by the artist himself were probably printed by Lemercier. The subsequent and definitive proofs were printed in 1902 by Lasally, Berlin. The motif had already been employed in a painting done at Nice in 1892. Cf. No. 9

18. FLOWER OF SUFFERING 1898
46×33 cm. (18⅛×13 in.). Sch. No. 114
Printed by the artist himself

19. WOMEN ON THE BEACH 1898
45·5×50·8 cm. (17⅞×20 in.). Sch. No. 117
Wood-engraving, printed in colours from a single block. Printed by the artist himself, partly by hand and partly on a press

20. MELANCHOLY 1901
38·5×45 cm. (15⅛×17¾ in.). Sch. No. 194.
Two blocks. Printed by Lasally, Berlin, in 1901

21. OLD MEN AND BOYS 1905
35×44 cm. (13¾×17¼ in.). Sch. No. 235
Edition partly printed by hand by the artist himself, partly on the press by Lasally, Berlin

22. PRIMITIVE MAN 1905
Signed: *Edv. Munch*
61·5×46 cm. (24¼×18⅛ in.). Sch. No. 237
Edition partly printed by hand by the artist, partly on the press by Lasally, Berlin

23. SUN BATH 1915
35×56 cm. (13¾×22 in.). Sch. No. 440
In several colours with two blocks

24. NUDE *c.* 1915
45×45 cm. (17¾×17¾ in.). Sch. No. 126
In several colours with two blocks. Edition printed by the artist himself

LITHOGRAPHS

25. PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST 1895
45·5×31·7 cm. (17⅞×12½ in.). Sch. No. 31
Executed in Chinese ink and crayon; edition printed on white or grey paper by Lasally in 1895. Variant No. 2, without border

26. THE SCREAM 1895
Signed: *E. Munch*
35×25·2 cm. (13¾×9⅞ in.). Sch. No. 32
Chinese ink. Printed in 1895 by Liebmann, Berlin.
The subject had already been treated in a painting of 1893

27. MADONNA 1895
60·5×44·2 cm. (21¾×17⅜ in.). Sch. No. 33
Chinese ink, crayon and scraper. Printed in 1895 and 1902 by Lasally, Berlin.
The subject had already been treated in a painting of 1894

28. DIN 1895
Signed: *Edv. Munch*
41·5×63 cm. (16¾×24¾ in.). Sch. No. 37
Chinese ink and crayon, printed on grey paper

29. JEALOUSY 1896
Signed: *Edv. Munch*
46·5×56·5 cm. (18¼×22¼ in.). Sch. No. 58
Chinese ink, crayon and scraper. Printed in 1896 by Clot, Paris

30. THE SICK CHILD 1896
Signed: *E. Munch*
42·1×56·5 cm. (16½×22¼ in.). Sch. No. 59
Four stones; crayon and Chinese ink. Printed in 1896 by Clot.
The subject had already been treated in paintings of 1887 and 1896

31. ANGUISH 1896
Signed: *E. Munch*
42×38·5 cm. (16½×15⅛ in.). Sch. No. 61
Chinese ink and scraper. Printed in 1896 by Clot

32. THE URN 1896
46×26·5 cm. (18⅛×10½ in.). Sch. No. 63
Chinese ink and scraper. Printed in 1896 by Clot

33. GUNNAR HEIBERG 1896
45×42 cm. (17¾×16½ in.). Sch. No. 75
Crayon. Printed in 1896 by Clot

34. ATTRACTION 1896
47·2×35·5 cm. (18⅝×14 in.). Sch. No. 65
Chinese ink, crayon and scraper. Printed in 1896 by Clot

35. SEPARATION I 1896
48·8×58·5 cm. (19¼×23 in.). Sch. No. 67
Chinese ink and crayon. Printed in 1896 by Clot. Only a few copies exist

36. SEPARATION II 1896
41×65 cm. (16⅛×25½ in.). Sch. No. 68
Crayon. Printed in 1896 by Clot

37. AGONY 1896
39·3×40 cm. (15½×15¾ in.). Sch. No. 72
Chinese ink and scraper. Printed in 1896 by Clot. Proof in black

38. FUNERAL MARCH 1897
55×37 cm. (21⅝×14½ in.). Sch. No. 94
Chinese ink and crayon

39. HEREDITY 1897–9
43·5×30 cm. (17⅛×11¾ in.)
Chinese ink and crayon

40. STANISLAS PRZYBYSZEWSKI 1898
54×44·5 cm. (21¼×17½ in.). Sch. No. 105
Crayon and scraper

41. LEAVE-TAKING 1899
40·5×53 cm. (16×20⅞ in.). Sch. No. 121
Crayon. Printed in 1899 by Lasally in Berlin

42. ASHES 1899
35·3×45·4 cm. (13⅞×17⅞ in.). Sch. No. 120
Chinese ink, crayon and scraper. Printed in 1899 by Petersen and Waitz, Oslo (the first state by Clot in Paris, 1896)

43. THREE STATES OF WOMAN 1899
46·2×59·2 cm. (18¼×23¼ in.). Sch. No. 122
Chinese ink, crayon and scraper. Printed in 1899 by Petersen and Waitz, Oslo
Munch himself often used the title, "The Maiden, the Prostitute, and the Nun"

44. HOLGER DRACHMANN 1901
Signed: *Edv. Munch*
58·6×44·8 cm. (23×17⅝ in.). Sch. No. 141
Chinese ink and crayon. Printed in 1901 by Lasally, Berlin

45. HENRIK IBSEN AT THE *GRAND CAFE* 1902
43×50 cm. (17×19¾ in.). Sch. No. 171
Crayon and scraper

46. VIOLIN CONCERT (BELLA EDWARDS AND EVA MUDOCCI) 1903
Signed: *Edv. Munch*
48×56 cm. (18⅞×22 in.). Sch. No. 211
Crayon and Chinese ink. Printed in 1903 by Lasally, Berlin

47. THE BROOCH (EVA MUDOCCI) 1903
60×46 cm. (23⅝×18⅛ in.). Sch. No. 212
Crayon and Chinese ink. Printed in 1903 by Lasally

48. YOUNG BERLIN GIRL 1906
44×35 cm. (17¼×13¾ in.). Sch. No. 253
Crayon on two stones

49. THE REVENANTS 1920
39×50 cm. (15⅜×19¾ in.). Sch. No. 487
Crayon. Printed in 1920 by Neilsen, Oslo

50. DEATH OF A BOHEMIAN 1927
25×40 cm. (9⅞×15¾ in.)
Crayon. There is an earlier painting of the same motif, c. 1925

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